

LETTERS

TO

*Sitings*

Mr. HUGHES of

PLYMOUTH;

AND

Mr. FORD of

EXETER

IN

DEVON.

CONCERNING

The Common Prayer.

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From EDM. ELIS, a Minister of the  
Gospel of JESUS CHRIST.

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LONDON

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LETTERS

OF

M. H. G. H. S. S.

PLYMOUTH

M. H. G. H. S. S.

THE

D. V. O. M.

G. H. S. S. S.

THE





# TO THE READER.



*I* Thought to have given thee a full account why I publish these Letters: But upon second Thoughts, I considered, that if thou art not capable upon a view of them to discover the Reasonableness of their Publication, thou wouldst not apprehend it, though I should expresse it unto thee. Therefore I shall onely say, that I heartily desire that all those, who professe themselves True Ministers of **THE TRUTH**, would resolve, as I have done, not to Write, or Talke any thing in Matters of Religion to particular Persons, or Congregations, which they are ashamed to lay open (in plain, and clear Expressions) to the view of all Men.

A 2

TO



To Mr. HUGHES.

SIR,

**I**F you have any thing to object against the use of the Book of Common Prayer, (I must confesse some expressions in the Forme for the Buriall of the Dead, and for Baptisme are such, that, though I do not dislike them, I do not undertake to vindicate them, because I do not finde that God has directed my minde so much to the study of those Points): But, Sir, if you have any thing to object against that Excellent Book (excepting those expressions) either as a forme of Prayer in generall, or as an Inconvenient Forme, I have no small confidence that I shall be able (by Gods assistance) to answer your Objection: And to give you some occasion to conceive some Spirituall Notions concerning Prayer, which possibly (for want of a due reflection upon your owne Opinion concerning Set Formes, &c.) you have not yet had; I shall intreat you to write me your thoughts, as *briefly* as you can with *perspicuity*, and plainnesse. Sir, I acknowledge your superiority in respect of Yeares, and Learning; but yet, let me tell you, I do not thinke you Infallible, neither so knowing, but that some of your Brethren, who are much your Inferiours in *Parts*, and *Learning*, may have received from the *Father of Lights* some particular Portion

of sacred Truth, which as yet you have not received. And therefore, Sir, I beseech you (as you expect that dreadfull Day, wherein you shall answer for all your Actions before him that shall judge the *Quick and the Dead*) that you would not despise my Youth, and scorn to send me an Answer. If you convince me, I doubt not, but the G O D, whom I serve will give me Grace to acknowledge my selfe Oblig'd to you for it: And if you do not, I firmly hope there shall be such an issue of our Controversie, that if you be so pious, as some good Men take you to be, you will not be troubled for having written to me. Sir, Farewel; And if you love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, be not so Uncharitable, as to thinke otherwise, then that 'tis the love of Him that puts me upon any business of this nature, which is so great a Trouble to my Outward Man. I am

Sir

Your Servant

EDM. ELIS.

MR. HUGHES HIS ANSWER.

Mr. Hughes his Answer.

SIR,

**B**Eeing suddenly surprized yesterday with an unexpected Letter from an unknown person by a strange hand, and having made a cursory view of it, with respect to its contents, I thought it best to muse a while, and not hastily return; but having since reviewed againe, I finde these heads observable therein.

I. A challenge of me to be an Opponent against an Excellent book of Common prayer, wherein, *you have no small Confidence, that you shall be an able Respondent, & give some Occasion to conceive some spirituall Notions concerning Prayer, which possibly (for want of a due reflection upon my owne Opinion concerning Set Formes, &c.) I have not yet had.* Sir, I shall be heartily glad to catch at any reall Notions about the spirit of Prayer, for I want much of it; but I should strange to see such spirituality to arise out of the flesh, and of prayer as stated by men; however I should be glad to see your promise performed.

As for my objecting, and your answering, it will be requisite, that the Question be rightly stated, and to know what Book you mean, there was that of *Edw. the sixth*, which since hath had many Editions and Additions to make it unlike it self: and yet of all these it is asserted by men wiser then my selfe, that none of  
them



them are established by Law; which I suppose is a Basis whereon you would not a little lean; It were meet that the speciall Subject were assigned; or perhaps the quære may grow higher and more generall, whether any set Forms as imposed by men, are warranted by God; and if none, your particular will fall in that: but I list not to be an Opponent yet, though provoked by you. I look for an higher Call.

2. Your censure of me, *as to yeares, &c.* yet you tell me, *you do not thinke me infallible, nor so knowing, but some Inferiours in parts and Learning, may receive from the Father of Lights some portion of sacred Truth, which as yet I have not received.* All this is truly spoken, I finde it as well as you say it; yet for saving truth, I trust I have received, what the Gospel revealeth, though but in my measure, and I am pressing on. What other sacred Truth you may intend, I know not, but I am not so old, but shall be willing to learn any truth of God.

3. Your adjuring of me, *(that as I expect that dreadful day, wherein I shall give an account of all my Actions before him that shall judge the quicke and the dead) that I despise not your youth, and scorn to send you an answer.* Sir, I tremble at Gods Word, and take it well to be minded of that great day; yet thus to be adjured upon so slight a matter, as the sending you an answer, I think is more than you can exemplifie from Paul to Timothy, who useth such a solemn charge upon the highest concerns. I thanke God I despise no mans youth, I rejoyce to see them grow in grace; and for your selfe, I know not how old, or young you be; yet without scorn, I shall say in Gods presence, among the many that I have known (if your owne word may be taken)

you





lawfull for men to impose any such formes upon Consciences, that those and none but those, must be used in the Church, by any who are able to make use of the Scripture Directory in all cases of their addresse to God. Unto these your clear answer is desired if you please, before we come to a congresse about particulars; wherein if you deale rationally and ingenuously, I may afford a further Reply; but otherwise, my worke is too much for my time, and I shall not spend hours vainly in such writing-contests. I shall give you no worse Farewell, than I had from you, commending to you the Book of books, from which your excellent Book hath all that is good in it. Make the Scripture your rule of your Faith, and Prayer, and Obedience. I am

Sir

Plim. Aug. 23. 1660.

*Yours to serve you in the Lord,*

GEO. HUGHES.

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To Mr. HUGHES.

SIR,

I Thanke you for your Letter, but must crave your pardon for not answering your *Queries*, being impertinent to my Designe in writing to you, which is, To know, whether or no you have any thing to object against this Position: That a man may worship GOD in *Spirit*, and in *Truth* in the Use of that form of Prayer for Morning, and Evening, which we call the *Common Prayer* (*simply* considered, without respect to it's being imposed, &c.) I conceive you might easily have apprehended this to have been my Aime by the expressions of my other Letters. As for the Forms for the Buriall of the Dead, Baptisme, &c. Though I do not except against them, yet because there are many expressions in them, from which such Controversies may easily arise, as a *Spiritual Man* cannot well discuss without losse of Time; I shall not undertake to vindicate them, unlesse provok'd to it by any that professe that they are scandal'd at my using of them. I have heard many men speak much against the use of the *Letany*, if you have any thing to say against it, I shall entreat you to insist on that in a particular manner; For, as yet I cannot apprehend any thing that can be objected against it, but what may easily be resolv'd into a *Phanaticke* humour: And I would faine know where the strength of that Opposition lies that

may be made against that, which I conceive may be of so great use to the Church of God. As for that I said I might give you some occasion to conceive some spiritual Notions concerning Prayer, &c. I shall maintain the expression. If your Opinion be, That a man cannot pray *in Faith*, using that form we speak of, I doubt not, but if I shall be able to discover to you the workings of mine own spirit, mov'd by God, in the use of that *Forme*, I shall be able to do that I said I had no small confidence that I should. Good Sir, deal with me, as 'tis fit for one Christian to deale with another, and avoid, as much as you can, all such expressions as may probably be made *Instrumentall* by the *DEVIL*, to worke in me that sinfull *Anger*, to which I am naturally inclin'd upon such Occasions, as in *Writing-Confessions* (to use your own words) men are apt to give one to the other: But, blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, with his Sons *Blood* I am able to *Quench the Fire* of that, and all other *Lusts*, as soon as I perceive it to be *Kindled* in me. If you say in your heart at the Reading of this, *Let him that standeth take heed lest he fall*, I shall entreat you to pray for me that I may take heed.

As for my *Adjuring* of you, I take the matter to be of so high Concernment, that I did well in so doing. You say (reflecting upon some expressions of mine) *For saving Truth, I trust, I have received what the Gospell revealeth*. God forbid that I should be so Uncharitable as not to hope that you have received all the *Principall* Truths that concern *Eternall Life*; but there may be some *subordinate* Truths (that I may so speak) the Apprehension of which might make the Knowledge of the other, more *Intense*, and more *Powerful* in their influence.

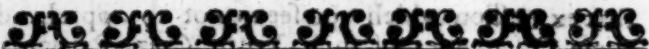
Influence upon the *Heart*. Such Truth I meant by that expression which you seeme not to apprehend. Some Discoveries of such Truth (*viz.* Particular Notices of the *Meanes of Grace*) I have often received from the Discourses I have had with *Experimentall CHRISTIANS*, though Persons of no Learning, or Art of Expression: and therefore, Sir, I do not thinke that you may justly say that I am *Juvenum Confidentissimus*; because I said (in effect) I had no small confidence that you might receive some New Apprehensions of sacred Truth from My Discourses, whose greatest *Study* for some yeares hath been how I may set forth to others those Truths, which I finde Written with the Finger of *GOD* upon the *Table* of mine owne Heart. Sir, That Confidence which I allow in My selfe, I esteem so highly, that I pray unto *GOD* continually to Encrease it: I know no Vertue a Minister of *CHRIST* hath more frequent Occasion to make use of, then true Confidence and strength of Spirit, *drawn forth* into the Soule from an Apprehension that *GOD* is our *Helper*.

Sir, I desire to approve my selfe to all Men, and particularly to your selfe (like Him, whom we are Bound to love, and imitate with all our heart, and with all our soul) Meek, and Gentle; and I hope you will shew your selfe no otherwise to

Sir

Your Servant

EDM. ELIS.



## Mr. Hughes his Answer.

SIR,

**Y**Our reply of the 4<sup>th</sup> instant, I received the fifth, and finding your resolution not to answer my Quæries, I cannot but in civility return these lines as a close to your Challenge begun, seeing the matter is not determined by the Respondent, unto which Objection should be made; for J know, the hinge of the Controversie about set Forms imposed, depends upon Scripture-Authority (from which in this case, as in all matters of Faith, J shall not depart, *ne hilum quidem*) As to what you write of other mens speaking against the Letany, J shall not meddle withall, nor as what you can say to other pieces of the book you mention; But this I shall say, if I understand what Letany is, neither is the word reciprocally with your matter unto which it is prefixed, nor the matter with the Word. And however you say, *nothing can be said against it, but what may easily be resolved into a Phanaticke humour*, I suppose if you read those Books written about this Argument, of which J think you are not ignorant, you may find more reason to be answered, than phancy to be jeered. If you seek for Objections, I refer you to them. As to other passages in your Letter, I shall be silent, lest I give you occasion to be angry; Only (I hope) as you use the experience of your own heart in your way of prayer to give you proof of its goodness,

ness, so you will allow the experience of others in a  
 other way of prayer than by book, to plead for them.  
 Sir, I shall make this amicable close with you, as to any  
 more writing ; You say my *Queries were impertinent to  
 your designe* : Truly I know not what your designe was,  
 but I am sure they were pertinent to determine the  
 question of imposing formes of Prayer on them, who  
 have no need of them in the Church of God. You say  
 also (*you consider it simply, without respect to its being im-  
 posed :* ) If you stand to your word, I come to this issue,  
 if you argue not to impose it on the Church of God,  
 which can by Scripture. directory make their addresses  
 to God without it, I shall not trouble you nor any that  
 think your selves to stand in need of any lawfull forme  
 of Prayer to help you. Onely do not bind men to crut-  
 ches whom God hath inabled to go without them. I  
 have done as to any more Letters about this matter ;  
 And now commending you to the Word of Gods  
 grace, which is able to keep you, and give you an inhe-  
 rittance among them that are sanctified, I shall ever rest,

*Phm.* Sep. 7. 1660.

Yours to serve you in the Lord,

GEORGE HUGHES.

TO



To Mr. HUGHES.

SIR,

**I** Thank you for your last Letter; but should thank you more, but that I finde an expression in it, which I apprehend, as very *Scoticall*, and Unfriendly:

That is this: *As to other passages in your Letter, I shall be silent, lest I give you occasion to be angry.* Sir, if those passages were *Evill*, I conceive you should be Bound in Conscience, having so fair an opportunity, to shew me wherein, (and that in such Plainnesse, and *Simplicity* of expression, as is fit to drop from the Tongue, or Pen of a CHRISTIAN, one that carries the Heavenly DOME in his Bosome:) if they were not *Evill*, you ought not to have such a reflexion on them, as I conceive you had in the writing of that expression. I must confesse a *Carnall Man* might easily have taken an occasion to scoffe at me, if I had written to him as I did to you, desiring that you would avoid all exasperating Language. But, Sir, I take you to be a Person, who know by your own Experience that it must needs be an exceeding great Trouble to any one that would alwayes *Repose* his Spirit in the GOD of Peace, to be at any time Discompos'd, though it be but by the least *Act* of Animosity, or Indignation against any mans person; and therefore that 'tis not so Foolish to do, or say what we can to prevent any thing, by which the DEVIL may possibly frame in us a Temptation to  
that

that Sin of *Anger*, or *Roughnesse* of Spirit. If you wonder why I should feare that you would deale *Uncivilly* with me, I must tell you, you gave me too much reason for it in your first Letter: namely by your *Juvenum Confidentissimus*, your so *slight a matter*, as the *sending you an Answer*: Your putting in these words, *An Able Respondent*, as mine, though they were not to be found in any part of my Letter: If I had exprest my selfe in those words, the expression must have implied a vaine boasting of mine owne Abilities, whereas the expression that I used implied onely a Confidence of the Goodnesse of my Cause, and the Strength that thereupon I should expect from God, when ever I should (in a pure, and vertuous intention) undertake to maintain it.

Sir, I cannot but wonder that you should say, *I know not what your Designe was*, when I had told you what it was expressly in these words: *To know whether or no you have any thing to Object against this Position: That a man may Worship G O D in Spirit, and in Truth, in the Use of that Forme of Prayer (for Morning, and Evening) which we call the Common-Prayer: Which, I told you, I consider'd simply, without respect to the imposing of it; And I do stand to my Word. But this I say, that if the K I N G shall thinke fit to impose it (by the reinforcement of that Old Act) I doubt not but there will be men enough found out that shall be ready to manifest to the World the reasonableness, and the piety of such an Action: but this Worke G O D hath not Call'd me unto That which I undertake is, to maintain the Assertion above mentioned; which I shall be ready to do (God willing) when ever I finde*  
*any*



I do not undertake to vindicate them, because I fore-

**TO MR. FORD**

SIR,

I have reason to suspect that what has been spoken

by you, and others in this County against the use of

the *Common Prayer*, hath begotten in the minds of

severall persons such a prejudice against it, as deprives

them of many of those good Thoughts which they

might enjoy, when they hear their Ministers say that

Service, if they did duly, and without prejudice at-

tend to it. Sir, If you think that a man may not wor-

ship God in spirit, and in truth in the use of that *Form*

of *Prayer*, which we call the *Common-Prayer*, I shall

calmestly entreat you to shew me what Reason you

have for rather what you take to be a Reason for this

your Opinion, which I take to be very Emotionous,

and very Obstructive to the Peace of the Church, if

you think your Reason Convincing, pray make use of

it, and endeavour to convince me. If you refuse to

write to me, how justly may I Fears that you make it

your Business to *Draw* the Vulgar into your Opinion,

rather than to *Guide* any one into the way of Truth? If

you shall object any thing against particular expressi-

ons, I must tell you, that those portions of the *Litur-*

*gie*, whose expressions I undertake to maintain, are

Morning, and evening Prayer, and the *Letany*. As for

the *Formes* for the Buriall of the Dead, Baptisme, &c.

though I do not except against any passage in them, yet

I do not undertake to vindicate them, because I foresee that such Controversies may easily arise from them, as a *Spiritual Man* cannot well discuss without Loss of Time (as I have said to another Learned Person.) Sir, I beseech you do not mistake me: I abhor Contention, though sometimes I finde it necessary to ingage my self in *Controversie*: I call no man upon Earth *Master*; but in all humility I acknowledge your Superiority, and profess my selfe

Sir

Your Servant.

To Mr. F O R D.

S I R,

SIth you scorn to answer my Letter, and *Despise* my *Stout*, saying, old men know young men to be *Fools*, &c. (of which my Friend has inform'd me at large) I would have you, and all others who shall *Censure* me, for writing to you, so harshly, as you have done, to know this, that I boldly *Appeal* to his Judgement, who *saw* My Heart when I wrote that Letter, and Yours, when you contemn'd it. I am

Sir

Your servant.

IF these **L E T T E R S** shall chance to be seen by Mr *Iaac Pennington* the younger, \* one of those whom they call Quakers, (whom I take to be one of the most *Honest*, and *Ingenious* of all those, who any way oppose the *Doctrine*, or *Discipline* of the Church of *England*) I shall entreat him to peruse them seriously, and if he find upon his Spirit any thing to be objected against that *Assertion*, which I have tendred to these men, Mr. *Hughes*, and Mr. *Ford*, either to be *Granted*, or *Oppos'd* by them, I shall entreat him to discover it in *Exact*, and *Punctual* Expressions: For from my soule I desire to know where the strength of that *Fancy* lies, which holds men so fast in this *Errour* of *Disliking* the *Common Prayer*. I shall further entreat this man to peruse seriously, and to lay deeply to heart (in the real *Fear* and *Dread* of the Great God, whom both He, and I say We *Know*) these following Lines, which I sent a while since to the Quakers in my own Country, who I hope (some of them) will not deny that I am a true Preacher of *Jesus Christ*, and *Him crucified*: And will I hope, e're long, by the *Day star arising in their Hearts*, clearly Discover that the opinion that the Church of *England* is any way *Antichristian*, must needs proceed from *The Father of Lies*.

\* If what hath been written by this *Pennington*, came from his heart, I conceive it impossible, but that he must needs *Abhor* that black *Hellish* act of *Murthering* our late *KING* of *Glorious Memory*: and also that cursed Opinion, that it may be *Lawfull* in some Cases for Subjects to take up Arms against their Prince.

To all Quakers, or Papists, or any Others, who do, or shall endeavour (upon a pretence of doing God service) to Seduce any of my Congregation from hearing the Publique Discourses I make unto them, to shew them the Path of Life, to shew them what they must do to be Saved.

**T**Hese are the Truths, which I Edmund Ellis, a Minister of Jesus Christ, Principally endeavour to make known to the sons of Men. 1. That the good Things of this life, Honours, Riches, &c. unless we make use of them in the service of God, are but vanity, and vexation of Spirit; And in no wise any more capable to satisfie, or content an immortall Soul, than *Lime*, and *Asbes*, and *Cobwebs*, and such like Trash are to satisfie, and keep in health the bodies of those persons, who through the depravedness of their Appetite, desire to feed on them. 2. That nothing but the Enjoyment of God, the Fountain of all Goodness can truly, and really content an immortall Soul. 3. That no man can enjoy God, but he that loves Him with all his heart, and with all his soul, and (for his sake) his Neighbour as himself. 4. That, though every sincere Convert, or Regenerate person loves God continually with his whole heart, as to the *Habit*, or *Root* of Holy Love; Yet whilst he is in the Body, he may sometimes fail



fall of the *ill*, or *fruit* of it, & may offend God through the love of the Creature: Which Truth (so much proposed in these days) is clear, and manifest in the Holy Scriptures: particularly in the Records of the heynous Sins of the Prophet David, and Paul the Apostle. 5. That the soules of the Faithfull are always growing in grace, whilst they are in the Body, and at the *Instant* of Death, or separation from the Body, our Lord Jesus shall present them to the Father without spot, or blemish. 6. That no man can so know God as to love him with all his heart, and with all his soule, but through the knowledge of *Jesus Christ*, & *His Crucifixion*: Who, by those grievous sufferings which he endur'd when he was upon Earth, made satisfaction to the Justice of God for the sins of all those that believe in His Name: so that it is as consistent with the Justice, as with the Mercy of God, to forgive them their sins, and make them Heirs of Eternall Life. God is just, and the Justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. 7. That the ready way to receive *CHRIST*, the onely *LIGHT*, by which we may see the Way to Heaven: or so to believe in Him that we may be saved by Him, is, to forsake all that we have that we may be his Disciples: that is to say, to take off our Affections from things on the Earth, and to set them on things above, where Jesus sitteth on the right hand of God: putting our Trust & Confidence in the *Free, & Infinite* mercy of God, through *CHRIST*, to be guided by him in all our wayes, to be led by his good Spirit in all those wayes of *GRACE*, and Holiness, through which we must pass before we can attain to Glory: Which I beseech the great God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, out of the infinite  
Treasure

Testimony of his love to Man-kinde in his Son Jesus, to  
 grant even to those that most wickedly revile me, even  
 to those which call me Deceiver, though all my Prea-  
 ching tend to this to enforce these most important  
 Truths upon the Hearts of those that Heare me: And  
 whether or no any one that has the Spirit of Christ may  
 not hear his Voice within him *Echoing* unto him (that  
 I may so speak) the words I deliver in the Expression,  
 or Declaration of those Truths, I appeal to the Judge-  
 ment of the onely wise God, and the spirits of those  
 men that are truly sanctified. Glory be to GOD on  
 high, and on Earth peace: Good will towards Men.

